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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 07015 201347Z

44
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OMB-01 OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05

IO-13 SAM-01 CU-02 FBO-02 OPR-02 SCCT-01 /097 W
---------- 064384
O P 201241Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1551
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 68
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
COMPHIBRON FOUR
COM THREE TWO MAU
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7015

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION AUG 20: MILITARY SITUATION SLOW,
EXCEPT FOR BEIRUT ARTILLERY BARRAGES; SARKIS PAYS A FEW CALLS

REF: BEIRUT 7003
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 07015 201347Z

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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1. SUMMARY: METN CAMPAIGN STILL NOT BEGUN IN EARNEST. HEAVY EAST-WEST ARTILLERY SHELLING IN BEIRUT CONTINUES, DESPITE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO STOP IT. LEFTISTS CLAIM AMBUSH OF SYRIAN VEHICLES IN BEKAA FEW DAYS AGO NETTED SYRIAN BEKAA COMMANDER. SOME FIGHTING IN TRIPOLI AREA. TENSIONS HIGH IN JEZZINE AREA IN SOUTH. SARKIS EMERGES TO PAY SEVERAL CALLS, AS FRANGIE NOW SEEMS DISPOSED TO RELINQUISH OFFICE SEPT 23. JUNBLATT ON WARPATH, REFUSES TO TALK POLITICS. EFFORTS CONTINUE PROMOTE LEBANESE-LEBANESE DIALOGUE. ARAB LEAGUE MILITARY COMMANDER CONTINUES STERILE EFFORTS ARRANGE CHRISTIAN-PALESTINIAN UNDERSTANDINGS ON THE GROUND. SYRIAN BORDER CONTROLS STILL CONFUSING. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SITUATION. METN. STILL NO GROUND ACTION BY CHRISTIAN OR SYRIAN FORCES ASSEMBLED IN METN AREA. ARTILLERY FIRE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN-HELD MROUJE, BOIS DE BOULOGNE, BROUMMANA AND BAABDATE AND PALESTINIAN-HELD SANNINE, AINTOURA AND ZAAROUR. LEFTIST PRESS CLAIMS CHRISTIANS AFRAID TO BEGIN OFFENSIVE WITHOUT SYRIAN HELP BECAUSE PALESTINIANS HAVE CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED POSITIONS.

3. BEIRUT AREA. HEAVY EAST-WEST BEIRUT ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENTS CONTINUE. SAEB SALAM AND PIERRE GEMAYEL COMMUNICATED AGAIN AUG 19 IN EFFORT REDUCE SHELLING, WITHOUT SUCCESS. PRESS NOTES APPEAL BY BRITISH GOVT TO SAME EFFECT. HEAVIEST ATTACKS ON CONFRONTATION LINE ARE ALONG AIN RUMMANEH-CHIYAH FRONT. ARTILLERY FIRE ALSO CITY OUTSKIRTS HAZMIEH, YARZE AND JAMHOUR. PFLP PUBLISHED LIST OF FIGHTERS IT LOST AT TELL ZAATAR, INCLUDING NOTABLY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER MOHAMMAD ABDUL KARIM AL KHATIB.

4. MILITARY SITUATION ELSEWHERE. IN BEKAA, LEFTIST SOURCES NOW CLAIM THAT THEY KILLED NUMBER OF RANKING SYRIAN OFFICERS, INCLUDING COL. ALI ZIYOUD, SYRIAN COMMANDER IN BEKAA, AND LEBANESE COMMANDER OF RAYAK AIR BASE, FAHIM AL HAJ, DURING AMBUSH AT TEMNINE AUG 17 (SITREP AUG 19). AS-SAFIR REPORTS SYRIAN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 07015 201347Z

REPRISAL ARREST OF 700 INHABITANTS OF TWO NEARBY VILLAGES. IN NORTH0 USUAL ARTILLERY SHELLING, PALESTINIANS REPORTEDLY ATTACKED CHRISTIAN POSITIONS AT MIRYATA. VOICE OF PALESTINE CLAIMS SYRIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS NEAR NAHR EL BARED REFUGEE CAMP. TENSION CONTINUES HIGH IN SOUTH, WHERE BOTH SIDES REPORTEDLY STRENGTHENING POSITIONS IN JEZZINE AREA. PALESTINIANS SAY CHRISTIAN MILITIAS SEEKING TO OCCUPY

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

VILLAGE OF ROUM; HOWEVER, THIS NOT CONFIRMED.

5. SARKIS MOVES. AUG 19 PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS PAID CALLS ON PRESIDENT FRANGIE, FORMER PRESIDENT CHARLES HELOU AND APOSTOLIC NUNCIO BRUNIERA. WE UNDERSTAND SARKIS AND FRANGIE DISCUSS
TTOOZ FORMER'S
ASSUMPTION OF POWERS ON SEPT 23. WE HEAR THAT SARKIS MAY VISIT WEST BEIRUT SOON. AL-MUHARRIR CLAIMS THAT MEETINGS BETWEEN SARKIS AND SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM ARE BEING ARRANGED, AND THAT SARKIS HAS BEGUN CONTACTS WITH SYRIANS TO ASSURE CONTINUATION OF EXISTING "UNDERSTANDINGS" WITH LEBANESE AUTHORITIES.

6. OTHER POLITICAL MOVES. JUNBLATT, WHO IS TAKING NEGATIVE ATTITUDE THESE DAYS, SAYS HE IS GOING TO STOP WASTING HIS TIME WITH SYRIAN AND CHRISTIAN MANEUVERS, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING PARTICIPATION IN QUADRI-PARTITE COMMITTEE, AND WILL CONCENTRATE ON "DEFENDING OUR MASSES AND PROVIDING MEANS FOR THE STEADFASTNESS OF OUR PEOPLE." RAYMOND EDDE SAYS SOME PALESTINIANS ARE NOW THINKING OF PARTITION AS BEST TEMPORARY SOLUTION TO THEIR PROBLEM. L'ORIENT SAYS THAT CHARLES HELOU, TAKIEDDINE SOLH, GHASSAN TUEINI AND GREEK ORTHODOX BISHOP SALIBI ARE ALL SEIZED THESE DAYS WITH EFFORTS TO BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN LEBANSES CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS, AND SEE A FEW ENCOURAGING SIGNS SUCH AS CESSATION OF RADIO AMCHITE ATTACKS AGAINST SAEB SALAM AND RASHID KARAME, AND CESSATION OF ATTACKS BY THE LATTER AGAINST PRESIDENT FRANGIE. KARAME IS SAID CONSIDERING VISIT TO SARKIS. ON FAR LEFT, NASSERIST LEADER QULAYLAT
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ANNOUNCED THAO IN EFFORT PREVENT DE FACTO PARTITION, HENCEFORTH CHRISTIANS IN WEST BEIRUT WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO EMIGRATE TO EAST BEIRUT BUT MAY MAKE TEMPORARY VISITS. HE SAID "THE CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN THE NATIONAL (I.E. LEFTIST) QUARTERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GUARANTEE OF THE IDEAL FORMULA FOR NATIONAL QOEXISTENCE."

7. ARAB LEAGUE. SOME LEBANESE POLITICAL CIRCLES BELIEVE THAT A MOST LIKELY LEBANESE DELEGATION TO ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT MEETING WILL CONSITOLOF SARKIS, KARAME AND CHAMOUN. ON THE LEFT, QULAYLAT SAYS SUMMIT PROJECT IS MERELY ATTEMPT TO LEND AIR OF LEGALITY TO SYRIAN/CHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY. AT MILITARY NEGOTIATING LEVEL, AL COMMANDER GHONEIM MET WITH

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

ALEXANDER GEMAYEL FOR THREE HOURS AUG 19. GHONEIM PRESENTED THREE-PHASE PLAN FOR CEASEFIRE: (1) PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM MOUNTAINS AND CHRISTIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM JEZZINE AREA, TO BE FOLLOWED BY SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM MOUNTAIN AREAS; (2) WITHDRAWAL OF MILITARY FORCES OF BOTH SIDES FROM BEIRUT AREA AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY ARAB LEAGUE FORCESU AND (3) SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM TRIPOLI AREA. GEMAYEL INSISTED THAT PALESTINIANS MUST FIRST WITHDRAW FROM MOUNTAINS. LIBYAN REPRESENTATIVE DURDAH IS GOING TO DAMASCUS, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRIMIN JALLOUD, TO MEET PRESIDENT ASSAD.

8. SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER. CONFUSION STILL PREVAILS ON PROCEDURES. AL-MUHARRIR SAYS THAT SYRIANS REFUSING TO HONOR PERMITS ISSUED BY MUHAFIZ OF ZAHLE TO LEBANESE SEEKING TO ENTER SYRIA, REFERRING TRAVELERS TO OFFICES OF LEBANESE SURETE GENERALE HEADED BY COL. ANTOINE DAHDAH. WE HEAR DAHDAH HAS TOLD SYRIANS NUMEROUS PALESTINIANS HAVE FRAUDULENT LEBANESE GOVT IDENTITY PAPERS. DAHDAH'S ORGANIZATION NOW IS REPORTED ISSUING PERMITS IN THREE LOCATIONS--JOUNIEH, ZAHLE, AND AT BSHARA IN NORTH LEBANON.
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